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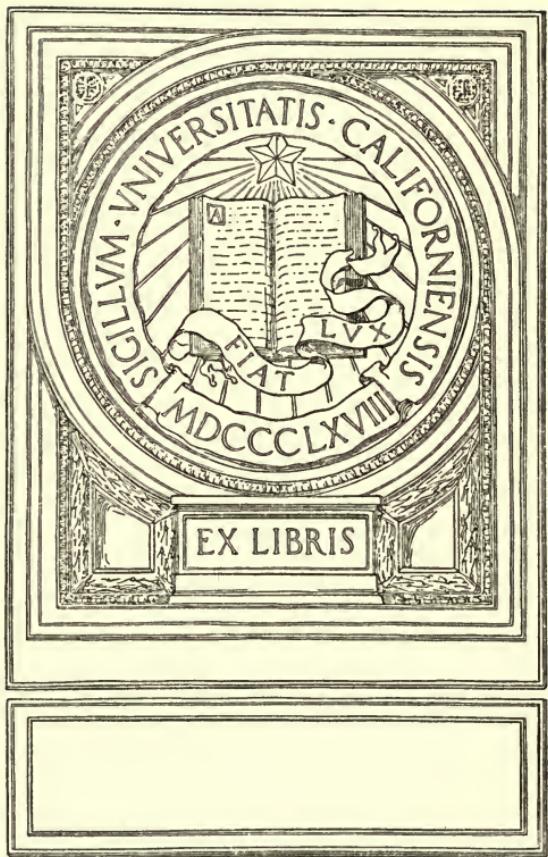
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POEMS

MEREDITH
NICHOLSON

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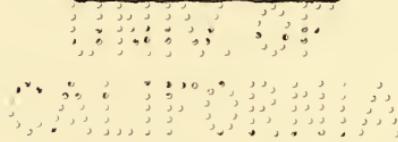




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POEMS

POEMS



MEREDITH NICHOLSON

INDIANAPOLIS
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APRIL

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

YOU came when song itself was tame,
Though many strove with idle aim
Like moths about the sacred flame
On ignorant wing;
You scorned, in beaten trails of fame,
To walk and sing.

You borrowed not Apollo's sign,
Affixed to many a lifeless line;
You sought not the dim shadowy Nine
Obscure, remote:
You wove the human and divine
In one clear note!

You would not strive with them that deign
To seek on chaff-strewn floors for grain,
And even for trampled husks are fain,
But, in the field,
You strove with infinite care to gain
Life's golden yield.

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*You sought no high and strenuous key
To mark your new blithe minstrelsy,
Invoked no shrine on bended knee,
In Greece or Rome,
But, all ungyved, your spirit free
Sang most of home!*

*In the lone farm-house you laid bare
The drama of its toil and care,
But making love triumphant there
Rise strong and sweet,
Like herbs that scent the summer air,
Bruised 'neath our feet.*

*'Twas your voice sang the yet unsung
Faith of a people brave and young
To whose rude speech a wild tang clung,
Of clean earth born,—
The variant Saxon of our tongue
You did not scorn!*

*You heard, in dewy haunts of spring,
The treble note of childhood ring,—
The homing stroke you taught its wing
That you, again,
Might woo that vagrant note and sing
Once more its strain.*

*Not mine the right to sing your praise
Nor twine for you the deathless bays,
But mine to walk in lighted ways
Lured by your rhyme,
Glad for the faith through faithless days
You shield from Time.*

*And you still hold, as at the start,
That which God set for you apart—
Faith, Love and Trust, that in your heart
Keep its song pure,
And the magician gift of art,
And these endure!*

**THANKS ARE DUE TO THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, THE
CENTURY MAGAZINE, HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY
MAGAZINE, AND THE READER FOR PERMISSION
TO REPUBLISH CERTAIN POEMS IN THIS VOLUME**

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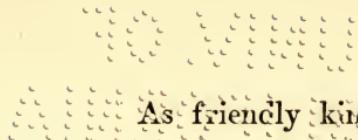
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POEMS

WHERE FOUR WINDS MEET

FROM homes beyond the farthest space
The winds come to their trysting-place.
Swiftly from north, east, south and west
Assembled on some lonely crest,
Or gathered where the murmuring pines
Have summoned them by secret signs,
They tell of journeys over seas
And whisper of earth's mysteries.
They know why strong sap-currents sing
Through northern trees in earliest spring,
And why bold flowers put bravely forth
In snowy woodlands of the north.
Such things he learns whose guided feet
May find the place where four winds meet.

It is not true the winds are foes,
Though some bring buds and some bring snows;
For they divide the earth's estate



As friendly kings might arbitrate,
And each is sovereign any hour
The mighty land is in its power.
They find delight in bold surprise
And would defeat man's prophecies.
Ships put not forth, seeds are not sown
Until the favoring gales have blown;
The destinies of nations wait
The winds that ruin or create.
These secret things he learns whose feet
May find the place where four winds meet.

Through summer woods at night's high tide
Lone winds from far horizons ride,—
So quickly gone, so faint of wing,
Ear scarce may catch their whispering.
And no one knows from what far home
Those idle messengers may roam,
Nor any more may seek to gain
Their purpose from the weather-vane!
But swift those tides unchallenged flow
Where only silent trees bend low—

A stir of leaves, a sudden hush,
A thrill runs through the underbrush,
Then, he who runs with wingéd feet,
May find the place where four winds meet!

Now I have sped in many a race
To find this secret trysting-place;
North, east, south, west have I been led,
Sometimes in hope but oft in dread,
Fearing to pause yet scorning rest,
Pursuing ceaselessly my quest,
For, whether on the land it be
Or foamy meadow of the sea
I find at last the tryst, lo, there
The tyrant captains of the air
Shall yield to me each plot and plan
By which they rule the world, and man
Thenceforth may walk with careless feet,
Indifferent where the four winds meet.

THE WIND AT WHITSUNTIDE

I

MAN names the stars across the gulfs of space
And calls the sea to tribute, and doth mock
The storm and lightning and the earthquake
shock,
And lifts from lonely peaks
Toward the stars his still triumphant face;
But the far-driven, pathless winds of God
He still in ignorance seeks,
Crying his whence and whither with vain breath
Where in soft airs the tranquil gardens nod,
Or pondering the wind's will
Along the pine-hung hill
And where the trumpet seas roll round the gates
of death.

II

First of the Blesséd Three,—
The adored, august and mighty Trinity—
Jehovah to earth came

In mystery and awe,
And gave to Israel out of cloud and flame
His iron-harsh, immittigable law
That for the rough, new-builded world was meet.
But man still restless yearned
For groves of peace whose springs should
 bubble sweet;
Nor smoking altars satisfied his need,
Nor fat of richest pastures sacrificed,
And Heaven seemed far indeed,—
A fortress grim on an embattled slope,
Where hotly on dull eyes the shining bastions
 burned.

’Twas then the Christ
With love renewed man’s hope,
Bringing the ark of peace down from the skies,
And out of golden deeds uprearing faith anew;
Nor Sinai’s lightnings blinded more man’s eyes,
But gentleness was crowned and meekness
 blessed,
While brighter shone the goal
To mankind seeking rest—

The long-sought haven of the laboring soul,
In Christ alone possessed;
And down the ages the bright marvel grew
That what is just and beautiful and true
Within the broad dome of near Heaven lies.

III

Thus of the Three
The high-ordained mysterious Trinity,
Jehovah and the Son
Man's need hath earthward won;
But who has seen or heard
The last, the majestic and ineffable One
And known His audible word?
To-night, midway of seas,
Out of the star-hung prairies glad with corn,—
Out of the deep-pulsed, steady heart of Time,
Out of the golden pillars of the morn
A great wind thundered by,
Voicing a hymn in deep sonorous rhyme,
And tossed in billows the June-vestured trees.
Across the odorous, sweet, low-murmuring night

I marked its urgent flight,
Then heard its laggard legion round me wake
and sigh.

That wind, methought, may be
Breath of the brooding and exalted One
Who cometh in secrecy,
Far-ranging the bright track of star and sun!
Holier is earth for every wind that blows;
The challenged ocean 'mid its tumult sings
Exultant in God's might,
And on the mountain height
The retreating tempest flings
The gleaming vesture of divine repose.

IV

O Winds, far-driven and lost
In the uncharted ether's high demesne,
Com'st thou to greet
Earth newly with the tongues of Pentecost?
Is't thus the Paraclete,
Veiled from earth's sealéd eyes,
Doth from high Heaven lean

Brooding o'er earth and sea?
O Winds, pour over me
Out of thy vast inviolable treasury
Thy winnowing, cleansing tide!
Anoint me from thy azure spaces wide!
Nearer than man's surmise
The Spirit of Spirits doth round about us
bide,—
The manifest breath and presence of the Three!
Thus doth Jehovah out of space
Again with man speak face to face;
And thus o'er earth Christ breathes again
The peace of the Judean plain,—
The hope of all this earth may be!
And thus o'er plains and hills
The tides of the four winds flow;
Thus the glad earth thrills
When the trumpets of Heaven blow;
And messengers earthward winging
On marvelous errands fly;
While the world-heart wakes to singing
And the Spirit of God is nigh!

THE VALLEY OF VISION

Isaiah XXII, 1 and 5

OVER what peaks does it lie, the wonderful
Valley of Vision,
Withhelden afar in the realm of the Spirit of
Rest?

Is it a verdurous cleft in the shadowy moun-
tains elysian,
Hidden by mist and cloud where the suns
go down in the west?

I never may find the place, the wonderful
Valley of Vision,
Though seeking for long the path that leads
to its singing streams;
The mountains unyielding stand, they laugh at
my search in derision,
Yet ever in faith I seek the hidden Valley of
Dreams.

CHARM

IT is a presence sweet and rare,
A something oft attained by Art,
Yet oft possessed, all unaware,
By folk of simple mind and heart.

And he that has it can not pass
The secret on with gold or name;
It vanishes like dew on grass,
Or heat that hovers over flame.

In books that man but little seeks,
Neglected or forgotten long,
This living essence dwells, and speaks
In happy rhymes of deathless song.

The subtlest of all mystic things,
'Tis strange indeed that it should be,
When worn by poets, beggars, kings,
The garment of Simplicity.

And you that seek it never find,
And you that have it never tell;
And all that strive to catch and bind
Can only startle and dispel.

WIDE MARGINS

PRINT not my Book of Days, I pray,
On meager page, in type compact,
Lest the Great Reader's calm eye stray
Skippingly through from fact to fact;

But let there be a liberal space,
At least 'twixt lines where ill is writ,
That I with tempering hand may trace
A word to dull the edge of it.

And save for me a margin wide
Where I may scribble at my ease
Elucidative note and guide
Of most adroit apologies!

CHORDS

THOUGHTS of deep pine-woods and of
chanting seas

Follow the magic hand-touch on the keys;
Now 'tis the violins that loudest cry,
And now in saddest key the 'cellos sigh,
Blent with the lonely challenge of the horn,
Echoed, in seeming, from some height forlorn.
Again, the drums and viols with sullen roar
Break with their sound-waves on the mind's
dim shore,
And sullenly die away. 'Tis then there come
Out from the cymbal-clash and roll of drum
Chords that are love and life, and even the
sharp,
Hard pain of death—chords of the golden harp.

THE WIND PATROL

No guard ventures to ask toll
Of the wind's midnight patrol,
And no eyes, however keen,
Have its flying legion seen;
Yet a thousand times and one
I have heard the vanguard run!
In the peaceful summer night
Or when snows lie cold and white,
From their far unmapped abode,
In contempt of beaten road
Come the wind men like a breath,
Fatefully and swift as Death.
Sometimes with a battle clash
Through the forest trees they dash;
And at other times they creep
Like a dream through vales of sleep.
Now these midnight riders own
Charms no daylight wind has known,

Whether leaving in their wake
Needful rain or soft snowflake,
Or, the earliest night of spring,
Waking all the sap to sing!
Elms and beeches in my wood
Long as guard for me have stood;
But across their barricade
Ride the wind men unafraid,
And a fearful challenge roar
As they charge my pane and door.
Then, before the house grows still,
They have gained the farthest hill
Of my quiet valley's marge,
Thence again to charge and charge!

A PRAYER OF THE HILL-COUNTRY

And the strength of the hills is his also.

LIFT me, O Lord, above the level plain,
Beyond the cities where life throbs and
thrills,
And in the cool airs let my spirit gain
The stable strength and courage of Thy hills.

They are Thy secret dwelling-places, Lord!
Like Thy majestic prophets, old and hoar,
They stand assembled in divine accord,
Thy sign of 'stablished power forevermore.

Here peace finds refuge from ignoble wars,
And faith, triumphant, builds in snow and
rime,
Near the broad highways of the greater stars,
Above the tide-line of the seas of time.

Lead me yet farther, Lord, to peaks more clear,
Until the clouds like shining meadows lie,
Where through the deeps of silence I may hear
The thunder of Thy legions marching by.

THE SPIRIT OF MOUNTAINS

SPIRIT of mountains that elusive leaps
From high-walled cañon to unguarded
height,
Only the thought may follow your winged
flight
Where the swift torrent, down the rocky steeps,
A flashing line of spray and vapor sweeps,
And through dim caverns bears the noonday
light,—
Or in the august and tranquil summer night,
Among cloud harbors where the lightning sleeps.

Spirit of mountains! Freest of all free things,
Let me the star-companions climb
With heart as strong as the bold eagle's wings!
Guide me to those serener slopes where Time
Less harsh the immelodious challenge rings,
And song is truth, and truth is sweet like
rhyme!

THE PSALMS IN THE MOUNTAINS

IN the great ocean's thunder
I heard the old songs ring,
I heard them in the prairies
Amid the grasses sing;
The murmur of the pine-wood
With Israel's hymns was sweet,
And through the little hills I heard
Their solemn rhythm beat.

But oh, 'twas in the mountains
Their mystery held me thrall!—
Where the four winds of heaven
Sent forth their challenge call,
With martial trumpets thrilling
The rough-hewn brawny range,
And through dark cañons chanting
The spirit of all change.

The cattle of the foot-hills
In gathering snow stood deep;
The shepherds through white meadows
Went stumbling for their sheep;
And where the lonely hamlet
Slept 'neath stern mountain walls,
The winds across the darkness
Sang hoarse antiphonals.

'Twas Zion's heart melodious
That woke the solemn height,
Till loud the ancient hymnal
Made glorious the night;—
Far-sounding notes of triumph
To grief and wailing ran,
As Nature's voices uttered
The cry of God to man.

IN THE GREAT PASTURES

Our cattle also shall go with us.

Exodus X, 26.

WHEN the grave twilight moves toward the
west,

And the horizons of the plain are blurred,
I watch, on gradual slope and foot-hill crest,
The dark line of the herd.

And something primal through my being thrills,
For that line met the night when life began!

And cattle gathered from a thousand hills
Have kept the trail with man,
Till their calm eyes his greater iliads hold;
The wonder-look, the dumb reproof and pain,
Have followed him since Abram's herds of old
Darkened the Asian plain.

A SHADOW OF THE ROCKIES

THE mountains from my window lie out-
rolled,
Their solemn peaks with coronals of snow
O'er which the fires of dawn and sunset flow,
And keen, high ridges by fierce winds patrolled.
With evening comes a mighty shadow cold
Across my doorway as the sun sinks low,
And, high above, the loftier summits show
Faint, as the twilight tames their outlines bold.

Then from the heights the spirit of repose
Steals earthward, with the peace that long
has lain
Secure amid the deep, untrodden snows—
A shadow stream, for which my soul is fain,
That from the towering peak of silence flows,
And pours its balm upon the toiling plain.

SIMPLICITY

IF power were mine to wield control
 Of Time within my heart and soul,
Saving from ruin and decay
What I hold dearest, I should pray:
That I may never cease to be
Wooed daily by Expectancy;
That evening shadows in mine eyes
Dim not the light of new surprise;
That I may feel, till life be spent,
Each day the sweet bewilderment
Of fresh delight in simple things,—
In snowy winters, golden springs,
And quicker heart-beats at the thought
Of all the good that man has wrought.
But may I never face a dawn
With all the awe and wonder gone,
Or in late twilight fail to see
Charm in the stars' old sorcery.

AN APRIL EASTER

THE sun has brought his golden keys
And opened wide the doors of spring,
Till earth's a-thrill with mysteries
Of breaking bud and eager wing.

I know not where spring's miracle
In the glad mold was earliest wrought,—
No more by striving may men tell
What first was in His holy thought

When the light seal of sleep He broke,
And in the darkened sepulcher
Once more to human sense awoke,
And felt the life within Him stir.

ASPHODEL

ONE night while loitering in some grove of
sleep

I saw a hand mysterious unbar
A gate, that from my heavy eyes did keep
A raging battle in a region far.
Then bugles sounded, and within my dream,
But yet distinct, insistent, came the roar
Of that strange conflict and the sudden gleam
Of weapons that a myriad warriors bore
And on that dust-blurred field
With sturdy hand did wield.

Cool was the wood
In which I stood
Intent upon that heated plain, and sweet
Were the dew-laden flowers about my feet,—

Sky-woven violets and moonflowers wan,
Roses and hyacinths whereon ne'er fell
The rival hues of any new day's dawn,
And oh, the asphodel, the asphodel!

“Ah, but for power to pass that open gate
And for the strength to break this hated spell,”
And praying thus I strove against the fate
That held me prisoner to the asphodel.

“Why must I see afar the battle rage
And not be of the armies there that wage
Such glorious conflict?” And I sought again
To leave that quiet wood and its soft air
For the fierce ventures of the shaken plain;
But the gate closed before my wondering eyes,
Leaving me gaping, like a child whose hand
Aids in a trick beyond his vague surmise,
Vexed with himself, yet fain to understand.

Then from dream's thrall set free,
I slowly turned, but yet contentedly,
To the deep odorous wood
With its sweet solitude;

Its roses, hyacinths and lorn,
Meek moonflowers, fearful of the morn,
And—oh, I loved it long and well!—
The asphodel, the asphodel!

If you were keeper of that gate, if you,
My friend, could give me entrance to that field
That I thereon some valorous deed might do,
So fame to me would yield
Reward of honor and of gold,
Would you the way unfold,
Or I be left my little while to dwell
A neighbor of the asphodel?

TO A DÉBUTANTE

YOUR dreams have never known a world so
fair

As this reality of joy and light;

The springs that o'er your head have winged
swift flight

Steal back again with all their fragrance rare
Of May-time blossoms. On the happy air,

Viol and harp and horn their burden bright

Add to the charm of this enchantment night,

That finds you queen, with none your reign to
. share.

But through the music's careless march and
swing,

Beyond these dancers' forms that drift and
sway,

I hear for you a graver measure ring

Where, far along on your appointed way,

A girl's heart to a woman's task you bring,

Serene and pure, amid the troubled day.

LOVE'S MUSIC

LOVE'S music is not set in simple keys
Of jingling catches and light melodies,
But rings in deeper, mightier chords than these.

Through marvelous symphonies it ebbs and
flows,

In choral storms, with martial power it blows,
And chants in solemn oratories.

Like hymns of victory are its pure chords
blown,
Or like a bugle's notes that rise alone
And call, beyond man's thought, to Death's far
zone.

Its strength is more mysterious than the tides,
As, unresisted, through the soul it rides,
Until in Memory's quiet haven it bides.

WEST[¶]

NORTH, east, south, west,—'tis thus geographers

Bound the known earth and for the unknown
make quest;

But I, remembering each sweet way of hers,
Look only west.

And less reluctant now that she has gone,
The golden sun goes down its arching way,
Bearing to her the welcome light of dawn
And the new day.

Such peace, such calm as hers they only find
Who know life and its surging waters wide,—
Who dare the deeps and shoals of soul and mind
At the supremest tide.

So as each eve the western windows grow
Bright in the dying rays and discords cease,
The thought of her becomes an afterglow
Of joy, calm, peace.

ESCHEAT

TO my estate no heirs succeed;
When I have done with it no man
Shall find it suited to his need,
Adapted to his plan.

The walls for me were built, and when
I close the door and turn the key
No one shall enter there again,
Or rule in place of me.

This house is all I own; though poor
It shelters me, and many a storm
Has passed it, leaving all secure,
The inner hearthstone warm.

But after me no eager kin
Shall hold my former house in pride;
No enemy shall enter in
As tenant to abide.

The friendly earth is good and sweet
And kindly to its heart will draw
Estates like mine when they escheat
By nature's changeless law.

SHADOW LINES

WHEN slow the brooding dark around
you falls,
Save only as the lamp's rose-mellowed light
Burns through it, but without dispelling
quite—
Trembling along the dim and shadowy walls—
What fleeting spirit of the evening calls?
What songs come stealing to you through the
night
Along the vistas of brave fancy's flight—
What story steals from old Romance's halls?

I can not fathom what these things to you
May bring; nor what sad thoughts to you
belong;
Nor know I whether rosemary or rue
Awaits you here or there; the path is long
And some things must be false and some be
true
And sad strains must be woven in the song.

YOUTH AND WINTER

WHEN summer days are long and sweet
The maples that o'erarch my street,—
My linden and the crimson rose
That round my southern window glows,
Efface the outer world for me,—
Scarce past the vine-clasped wall I see,—
Nor longer flight my eyes are led
Than to my neighbor's canna bed!

But when the leaves have vanished quite
New vistas broaden to my sight;
December's broken arches give
Visions less faint and fugitive
Of Mabel, Grace and Josephine,—
Who have not yet known seventeen!
Of Gwendolen,—a few years more
In her brief audit I must score!—
And Nora,—she whose teasing eyes
Make wisdom futile,—and unwise!

Ah, easy 'tis in summertime
Within to find thoughts winged for rhyme;
But when the skies are gray and cold
And all the summer's tales are told,
My eyes leap eagerly to greet
Youth down the long aisles of the street.
From Mabel, Josephine and Grace
My pulse derives a quickened pace;
Hope's vanished hours grow gold again
Whenever I see Gwendolen;
And age-won wisdom meetly flies
From Nora of the teasing eyes.

“IN WINTER I WAS BORN”

In winter I was born,
So all my years I've loved the frost and snow
And the strong, tireless winds that, passing,
blow
A battle note forlorn.

I love the year's long night.
The tumult of great storms, the biting air
Make my heart's summertime, when days are
fair
And yield me true delight.

In winter I was born,
And as I came so let me pass away,
Out from the world on a December day
When the delaying morn

In the far east shall creep
Last time for me; then let the winds I love
Come from their far-off homes and sing above
The place where I shall sleep.

THE WINTER WIND IN THE ROCKIES

SNOW-crowned the mighty Babels round me
rise!

Long the rude towers and battlements have
rung

With furious speech, in many a thunderous
tongue,

Till a fierce clamor fills the wondering skies.

Anon, when the discordant chorus dies,

Low oratorios to the plains are sung,
Voicing the ages when these peaks were
young

And echoed first the wind's confuséd cries.

Hark! How at midnight the tumultuous throng
Blend their harsh dissonance in one deep roar

Whose note through lonely cañons wanders
long—
Hymning the north's withholden splendors
hoar,
Chanting the stilled sea and the imprisoned
shore,
With twice a thousand winters in their song!

GOD SAVE THE STATE!

ASK of me not that in the loud acclaim
I join, to laud the day's victorious name,
Whether your choice or mine,—though I am
prone

To plead inexorably for my own,
And flout your creed as false, proclaim mine
wise.

Yet not with man or cause the triumph lies,
For what has been established, what disproved?

In the November midnight I am moved
Less by exultant shouts that o'er the town
Herald the chief new-laureled for renown,
Than by the thought that, safe from strife and
hate,

August, serene, triumphant lives the State,
Immutable and steadfast like the hills!
Though over it a thousand warring wills

Storm fitfully, they only prove it strong.
And you and I, who prate of error and wrong,
Hear many a challenge 'neath the citadel
While the calm sentry answers "All is well,"—
And starward lifts his eyes! Man's faith in
man
Remains the secret still of God's great plan
Whereof He gave to us the golden key
That seals our covenant with Liberty
And makes her holy ark for aye our own,
To hold for Man and not for men alone!
Your hand, my friend! The heavens decree our
fate;
Who loses or who wins, God save the State!

November, 1904.

THE EARTH

WITH gathering years the earth has not
grown tame,

In man's firm clasp a mere imprisoned ball,
Though conquering feet have trodden nearly
all,

And even the uncharted has received a name;
There still loom heights deserving of man's
aim;

Forbidding isles still lie beyond his thrall;
The silent Polar doors heed not his call,
And inmost tropic wilds he scarce dare claim.

Yet, when at last the globe is mastered quite,
And prying man has left no inch unscanned,
He still must pause before earth's moods of
might

That lift the sea and toss the desert sand,—
That set the dread volcano's torch alight,
And send strange tremors through the startled
land.

AN OLD GUIDON

THROUGH this torn scarf my father's hand
Set, 'mid the battle's thunderings,
More truly I can understand
The strifes of ancient chiefs and kings.

Faintly to-day Thermopylæ
In song and story clangs and rings;
Shiloh and Kenesaw bring me
Nearer to all heroic things.

THE HEART OF THE BUGLE

I HAVE heard the bugle blown
Where the southern seas make moan;
And have followed east and west
At its trumpeted behest;
By the mighty mountains' marge
I have heard it sing the charge,
Till old battles in my blood
Were a mighty tide at flood—

O bugle!

I have seen the bugler stand
With the trumpet in his hand,
When the winter's dawn-light gray
Brought again reluctant day,
Very silent, very lone,
With the whole world for his own,
Till he woke it with a note
From the brazen trumpet's throat—

O bugle!

Then I saw old battles fade
Far across the dim parade,
And a thousand knights went by
Like a moving tapestry;
Old crusaders riding fast
Down dark vistas of the past,
Worn and broken in their mail
While the bugle sang them hail—

O bugle!

As within the fort's grim bound
Swift the bugler made his round,
Dawn and youth were in the call
That he sent from wall to wall!
I saw Troy and Marathon
In the faint light of the dawn;
Battles old and battles new—
Agincourt and Waterloo—

O bugle!

Now my blood more swiftly beats
Victories and brave defeats;—

Shiloh passes and I see
Swing in place a battery
With plunging horses seared and scourged,
By an undaunted leader urged,
'And in that smoke-hung, fire-swept place
I see—through tears—my father's face—

O bugle!

SHILOH

THOUGH the blest winds of peace down the
highways are blowing,
And blithe birds are singing where bullets
once sped;—
Though the wheat and the corn on the old
fields are growing
The ground is still hallowed by blood of the
dead.

O battery boys, can you hear it, the roaring
Of great iron engines along the gray lines?
The bugles sing sweetly; the eagle is soaring
Where on the far borders your old guidon
shines.

On the lumbering caissons you rode to your
glory;
The lanyards were latch-strings that opened
to fame!

While the rolling discharges gave rhythm to
your story,
Your armor was woven of smoke blent with
flame.

Is it riven and faded, or is it still gleaming
To mark, here the bivouac, and there, bat-
tle-lines?

Wind and sun have been kind, so that still in
your dreaming
On life's farthest margin the old guidon
shines.

CUBA

SHALL we who in the mighty west
Set foot upon a king's decrees
Let vulture Spain hide in her nest
The fair pearl of the southern seas?

In selfish ease we watch the fight
And say "How fine their battle-rage!"
Yet, lending nothing of our might,
We forfeit our own heritage.

We mock the Briton's cautious plan
Amid the Sultan's bloody work,
But while we prate of love of man,
May not the Spaniard match the Turk?

We praised Kossuth. Mazzini's name
And Garibaldi's warmed like wine;
Remembering them, 'tis to our shame
We aid not Cuba's wavering line!

I know not whether black or white
They be who strive to make her free;
They seek the sun at darkest night
And prove their right to liberty.

I know not whether black or white
Nor care, since Lincoln's strong arm caught
The curled whip o'er the bondman's back
And a wronged people's freedom wrought!

A Latin people gave us aid
And dared for us to break a lance;
To Cuba let the debt be paid
We owe to liberty and France!

Hark! the long Caribbean wave
Moans on the island beach and dies;
We, with our lion's strength to save,
Feel the shame growing in our eyes.

No! we are not a coward land!
A sword-flash with our sympathy!
Let us help rear, with practised hand,
A new republic of the sea!

January, 1898.

“BLESS THOU THE GUNS”

HID in earth's caverns deep,
In the cold ores asleep,
Or in the lightning's thrall,
Force waits for Freedom's call!

Out of Thy mountains old
Thou gav'st the iron we mold,
And the stern, tempered steel
To liberty we seal.

May we Thy gifts of might
Use well to serve the right;
And may our solemn wrath
Leave clear for peace a path—
Bless Thou the guns!

Not worn with ancient hate
We the first shock await;

Not that our Saxon kin
Hemmed the Armada in,
But that Thy word may be
No empty prophecy;
That faith may rise, restored
By the avenging sword,
We out of peaceful ways
Turn to the power that slays.
Out of the battle's flame
Lord, bring us free from blame—
Bless Thou the guns!

Lord, at our very door,
Death clutches at Thy poor,
And stricken liberty
Raises her hand to Thee;
Lord, 'tis our task to do
If Thy own word be true!
Thou who the bright stars blent
In the flag's firmament—

Thou who to Freedom's hand
Gav'st the new western land,
Thou who didst Israel lead
Forth, free of Pharaoh's greed—
Bless Thou the guns!

April, 1898.

THE HORNS

MY soul had died for joy what time
The violin sang out alone,
And requiem bells in solemn chime
Grieved through the viol's moan.

Then harp and 'cello led me on
Through maze of tender harmonies,
Beyond the hour, beyond the dawn,
Beyond the utmost seas.

But through that realm by music bound,
Like a bold blast of freshening air,
Sudden I heard the trumpets sound
With harsh and militant blare.

Then, as to Joshua's trumpet-call,
Seven days repeated, Jericho
Yielded its stern, reluctant wall,
So were such dreams brought low;

And, their poor ruin quickly spurned,
Into fierce conflict I was hurled,
Where fields and cities brightly burned,
And battle shook the world.

BELLONA

(Gêrome's Statue)

WHAT wanton bold, exultant in her
shame,—

What monster art thou in this woman's
guise?

Think'st thou with blatant shout the world to
tame,

Or awe man with thy terrible great eyes?

Thou art Bellona, the fell scourge of earth,
Who set'st for man his false, ignoble goals;
Thou the destroyer of love and bane of mirth,
Thou the relentless trafficker in souls.

Death's lure thou art, on his dark mischief bent,
In splendor clad his livery gray to hide;
His cry thou bellowest from the battlement;
On ruddy fields before him thou dost ride.

Art thou so glorious? Are thy deeds so great?
Canst thou awake earth's myriad slaughtered
hosts,
Or summon from the sea's unpillared gate
Thy drowned armada-sepulcher of ghosts?

I cower not before thy shining blade
Thou hold'st upraised and bloodily dost wield;
Nor fear the serpent that doth give thee aid,
Nor shrink before the radiance of thy shield.

Where thou destroy'st I build; where thou dost
blight
My hands restore; I thy lorn thralls release;
My pinions touch thy darkened world with light
And healing for its wounds: Lo, I am
Peace!

A TENANT

THIS spirit with its boundaries wide
Is not my own to hold in fee;
Through all my days therein I bide
As one of God's great tenantry.

'Tis not as unsown fallow land
To lie, the playground of wild weeds,
But lent me from the Sovereign's hand
To grow the fruitage of fair deeds.

And I ill-pay His faith and trust
If the field be but weakly tilled,—
Unsown the rich unbroken crust,
Or sown in labor feebly-willed.

But 'tis for me to tend my field
Till white with harvest my life be,
And I full-handed bring its yield
In proof of honest tenancy.

NEW YEAR'S COLLECT

LORD, another year has wrought
Changes with deep meaning fraught;
Give us larger understanding
Of the lessons Thou hast taught.

By Thy hand our stars were sent
Forth into the firmament;
Help us lift our starry guidon
To the height of Thy intent!

Slow in anger to condemn,
May we Wrong's dull tide-wave stem
With the righteous wrath of Sinai,
And the love of Bethlehem!

Oh, 'twere shameful if, at last,
All forgetful of the past,
We should weld in roaring forges
Tyrant chains to bind us fast!

In our hearts let hatred cease,
And tranquillity increase;
Teach us that the God of Battles
Is not less the God of Peace.

It sufficeth not that we
High before the world stand free,—
We must still with infinite striving
O'er ourselves the victors be!

In our pride doth lurk defeat
If with dragon-wrongs we treat;
Strengthen us that, like Saint Michael,
We may break them 'neath our feet!

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

FROM Bethlehem to Calvary, the Saviour's
journey lay;

Doubt, unbelief, scorn, fear and hate beset Him
day by day,

But in His heart He bore God's love that
brightened all the way.

O'er the Judean hills He walked, serene and
brave of soul,

Seeking the beaten paths of men, touching and
making whole,

Dying at last for love of man, on Calvary's
darkened knoll.

He went with patient step and slow, as one
who scatters seed;
Like a fierce hunger in His heart, He felt the
world's great need,
And the negations Moses gave He changed to
loving deed.

From Bethlehem to Calvary the world still fol-
lows on,
Even as the halt and blind of old along His
path were drawn;
Through Calvary's clouds they seek the light
that led Him to the dawn.

MEA CULPA

ONCE I have seen you press against your
heart

A hand, in sudden pain;
Oh! it was mine, the pain, the cruel smart!

Once, only, pain made shadow in your eyes—
My own were void of light,
For they the seas are that reflect your skies.

By day or night the clenching hand I see,
And eyes by pain possessed;
There is no other sight or thought for me.

This penance ceaselessly I must withstand—
The pain in your sad eyes,
And close against your heart the clenching
hand.

NEWS

SWIFT runners through the Mahdi's land
Dart tirelessly to bear the word
When first the hot Egyptian sand
By some mysterious foe is blurred.

Through listless tropic jungles speed
Dark men, alert, intent and keen,
Who bid their scattered tribesmen heed
Some startling portent they have seen.

Lithe island messengers ply deep
Their paddles in the southern sea,
When first on dim horizons creep
Strange masted things of mystery.

Slow rousing from his night of days
The Eskimo awakes, reborn,
Hearing first time, in awed amaze,
A gun salute the Arctic morn.

O'er desert sand and 'neath the sea
The lightning's instant message goes,
To tell the whole world speedily
What now some lonely village knows.

We scan the path outside the door
By day and night, with eager eyes,
And only things unknown before
Can yield the charm of fresh surprise.

The gossip of the world flies fast,
The idlest rumors far are blown,
And swiftly gathered to the past
Are all the deeds an hour has known.

FOR A PIONEER'S MEMORIAL

A CROSS the world the ceaseless march of
man

Has been through smoldering fires, left by
the bold,

Who first beyond the guarded outposts ran
And saw with wondering eyes new lands un-
rolled—

Who built the hut in which a home began,
And round a camp-fire's ashes broke the
mold.

ORCHARDS BY THE SEA

A LONG the northern coast they stand,
These groups of rugged apple-trees,
Grim outposts of the fruitful land,
Defying winds and seas.

The waves that beat the rocks below
For long have shaken branch and root,
Yet the gnarled boughs again will show
Their meager yield of fruit.

And inland apples, softly kissed
On quiet boughs by dew and rain,
Unflavored by the salt-sea mist,
Untaught by the sea's pain,—

But tamely live, and never share
Those secrets of the elder seas
Once held inviolate by the fair
Fruits of Hesperides.

IRELAND

IRELAND, weary mother sitting,
Lorn amid thy seas;
When shall thy far-scattered children
Gather at thy knees?
Thou art worn and old and broken,
Thou art lean and cold,
When shall they again assemble
In thine island fold?
They are aliens, they are wanderers,
Driven far to roam,
But with querulous voice thou call'st them,
Call'st thy children home.

Other lands thou gav'st to freedom,
Through thy dauntless sons;
O'er the round world they are buried
Dead beneath their guns;

Seeking liberty thou sent'st them
Through far field and flood,
But they may not fight thy battles,
Shed for thee their blood!

Other soil has known their valor,
Willing heart and daring hand,
But again thy voice is calling,
Calling home to motherland.

Thou art in thine age majestic,
Queenly in thy rags,
Like an eagle mother stricken
In her native crags—

Who, in her riven place of nesting
Sees by cruel hands far-flung
Her new brood of fledgling eaglets,
And cries fiercely for her young!

Ah, thou, too, art lonely, dreaming
In thy desolate home apart,
Yet thy foes may break thy pinions,
But they can not break thy heart!

Thou art still a royal mother
By no child disowned;
To thy loyal sons and daughters
Thou art still enthroned!
Let thy fingers, slow and feeble,
That were once so quick and strong,
Wake thy harp's note, that, exultant,
Led of old a nation's song;
And thy dimming eyes shall brighten
Through the full-flood of thy tears,
As thou hear'st afar thy children
Marching home across the years.

WATCHING THE WORLD GO BY

SWIFT as a meteor and as quickly gone
A train of cars darts swiftly through the
night,—

Scorning the woods and fields it hurries on,
A thing of wrathful might.

There, from a farmer's home a woman's eyes,
Roused by the sudden jar and passing flare,
Follow the speeding phantom till it dies—
An echo on the air.

Narrow the life that always has been hers,
The evening brings a longing to her breast;
Deep in her heart some aspiration stirs
And mocks her soul's unrest.

Her tasks are mean and endless as the days,
And sometimes love can not repay all things;
An instrument that, rudely touched, obeys,
Becomes discordant strings.

The train that followed in the headlight's flare,
Bound for the city and a larger world,
Made emphasis of her poor life of care,
As from her sight it whirled.

Thus from all lonely hearts the great earth
rolls,
Indifferent though one woman grieve and
die;
Along its iron track are many souls
That watch the world go by.

GRACE CHIMES

“**L**EAD, kindly light,” I heard the glad
 bells ring,

And thought how God existeth everywhere;
‘Twas in a city strange that, sweetest thing!
“Lead, kindly light,” I heard the glad bells
 ring,

And summer quickened in the heart of spring,
For where the kind light leadeth all is fair.

“Lead, kindly light,” I heard the glad bells
 ring,

And thought how God existeth everywhere.

DERELICT

A HOPE once sailed me through the summer
sea,

And bravely through the waves I plowed my
way;

The captain and his crew in praise of me
Sang all the happy day.

Forth on my spars the nimble seamen drew
The snowy sheets to catch the sturdy breeze;
I thought, "How blest am I with captain, crew
And willing sails like these."

A great storm came and to my very heart
I felt the shattering wind that charged and
wheeled,

Driving me into deeps no guiding chart
Had ever yet revealed.

On calm sea meadows fell the gradual dawn;
Lifeless and helpless on the waves I lay,
By winds and ocean currents guided on
And with no hand to stay.

For my good captain and his merry crew
Abandoned me when, snapping like a reed,
One tall mast fell; quick to their boats they
flew—
Cowards in my dire need.

My rudder does the waves' behest, my keel
Unheedfully skims over hidden bars;
I answer not the noon sun's fierce appeal
Nor challenges of stars.

No longer matters it if storms prevail;
Of my decrepitude the waves make sport;
My decks will never hear a welcome hail
From any wide-armed port.

Or far or near pass joyous peopled ships
And gaze at me with strange distrustful
eyes;

Through fogs their pilots steer with tightened
lips

Lest my dread ghost arise.

THE WAYWARD MUSE

ON pleasant days I'm prone to shirk
My well-planned hours of indoor work;

I find that fleetly speeds the time,
With no words caught in nets of rhyme.

I see my muse (the inconstant fay!)
Across the threshold dart away,

And through the woodland disappear
When first the breath of spring is here.

On all the long, bright summer days
She guides me through enchanted ways,—

Through meadows fair, by singing brooks,
And scorns to speak of men or books!

When autumn's golden days are brief,
And earthward slants the withered leaf,

She leads me down the street's long aisle
Into the country, many a mile!

But when the skies in gray are set
And all our pleasant walks are wet;

When keen winds blow and snows are deep,
At home we twain our vigil keep.

She sits there in the ingle-nook
And dreams, or turns some mellow book,

And tends my fire, or, happiest chance!
Bends on my page her favoring glance.

Now I am glad when I can see
The summer skies arched over me,

And glad, when bluebirds bring me news,
To follow countryward the muse;

But well I love these golden times
When from the fire I coax my rhymes;

When in the flame of hickory wood
I read new poems, sweet and good:

For then I need not turn the key
To keep my faithless muse with me;

I need not threaten, then, nor scold,
At home that errant girl to hold!

For when the first thin snows appear,
Her foot upon the step I hear,

And she steals in with smiling face,
Again to her remembered place,

And in her peaceful corner croons
Light-hearted songs of bloomy Junes,—

Or, haply, she and I together
Send song-barbed shafts against the weather!

MEMORY

THIS hour the fateful tide runs up the
beach,
As the sea wills it;
It seeks each hollow loved of yesterday,
Finds it, and fills it.

UNMAPPED

WHOSE hand shall limn the final chart,
Complete, with every stream that
flows,

With pathways which the bold of heart
Have trampled through the Polar snows?

Perchance to-morrow's sun will shine
On outposts by some desolate shore
Where man's advancing picket-line
Must pause and camp forevermore.

E'en now the wide-strewn island host
Within the map's net has been drawn,
And soon no mere adventurous boast
Shall lure the tropic traveler on.

But when the maps are finished quite,
And all the stranger world is known,
Still shall abide the elusive light
On coasts where Fancy's winds are blown.

And fearless eyes for long may strain,
And steady hands may guide the helm;
But none may ever hope to gain
The farthest shore of Fancy's realm.

JOHN TYNDALL

OBIIT DECEMBER 4, 1893

SERENE on cheerless seas he drove his
bark,
Skirting with dauntless heart the ignorant shores ;
Crossed roaring reefs and set his finder's mark
Beyond Imagination's open doors.

The oldest mysteries of this spinning ball
He solved, and at the door of Silence beat,
Nor was dismayed by echoes of his call
That broke afar, his purpose to defeat.

The potent elements of giant force,
The heat and light girt on the earth's
great tire

He watched, as fast it flies its channeled
course

Along a daily changing track of fire.

Nor as a dreamer who may vigil keep,
Seeing the mighty planets spin afar,
But with precision sounding deep on deep
And linking to the lamp the golden star.

High on the muffled line of ice and snow
He sought where others had not dared to
seek ;
There Knowledge made for him a new dawn's
glow,
Lighting his beacon at the farthest peak.

THE DEAD ARCHER

MAURICE THOMPSON, OBIT FEBRUARY 15, 1901

THROUGH what dim alleys of the wood
Has he, the keen-eyed archer, gone?
By what bright lakes and bubbling streams
And o'er what golden hills of dawn?

Nor here nor there he gains the trail
His eager feet have known of old,—
No eye may mark his careful track
Printed upon the winter mold!

Yet all the faint elusive things
His spirit knew and counted good,
Hark to the archer going forth
Through the still, twilight-shadowed wood.

And where afar the dying sun
Burns in the west its fiery mark,
Still with his song the archer goes,
Unawed into the Greater Dark;

Nor knows that he has crossed the line
Long set to be the bound for men;
Nor knows that when the long trail ends
He never can return again!

His woodman's craft at last has failed,
At last the archer's eyes betray;—
His own song lures him down the path,—
His own song lights the darkening way!

The echoes fainter fall and die,
And grieving winds from cold seas blow,
Moaning above the gathering dark:
“It was not time for him to go!”

For him there still was much to do
To stay the audit hand of time,—
New bows to bend, new trails to seek,
New songs to wed to mellow rhyme.

In youth the bugle's challenge note
Had led him 'mid the clang of war,
But happier he to roam the fields
An archer and a troubadour!

When clouds hung near and woods were gray
In olden books renowned and wise,
He learned the miracle that makes
Bright pages of the dullest skies;

And songs he gathered from o'er seas
With his own music woke and sang,
Till through the unhindering western hills
Hymns of immortal singers rang.

But not in alien soil he sought
The faded trappings of romance;
He saw by western elm and beech
Fresher enchantments flash and dance;

And dipped his blade and sped his shaft
In valleys men have little known,
Hearing faint chimes from elfland towers,
Mingled with songs the wind had sown.

His heart was like a bow of yew
That nature tempers fine and strong,
And from it the glad arrows went
Keen with the music of his song.

April her brimming cloud will bring,
And May her odorous charm repeat,
But here no more the happy grass
Will leap beneath the archer's feet.

Still, in far glades and by clear streams,
Where soft airs blow and glad birds wing,
The blithe, brave arrows of his song
Through the bright weather fly and sing!

Spirits that guard the woodland paths,
And lie in wait beside the streams,
Lead him where he shall find anew
Green meadows, and his morning dreams !

“SHE GATHERS ROSES”

O WINTER night, O muffling snows,
From dolorous mountain summits blown!
So wild the night, so bleak and cold,
'Twas far to send a child alone!

But from our own poor watch and ward,
And our weak aims and needs and fears,
Her spirit sped and left behind
The untouched harvest of her years.

Blesséd are they, who, old and worn,
Across the threshold creep at last,
With many a lingering glance behind
At the gray shadow-peopled past!

But thrice more blessed they who look
Scarce through the door Time opens wide,
Then back into the Father's arms,
From earth's untroubled strivings hide.

And whether Heaven indeed may be
A gated city, builded strong,
That hath no need of stars or sun
To light the beatific throng;

Or whether in the home of spring
The haven lie of flower and grass,
O'er which the elect with tranquil mien
Through a perpetual morning pass,

I know not, yet however fair
May be God's hidden garden-lands,
I know that there, with happy heart,
She gathers roses in her hands.

The autumn gave her, and her eyes
Knew never spring's enchantment sweet,
Nor saw the mighty summer stars
Above the still earth throb and beat;

And yet she loved the light, and turned
In childish wonder toward its glow,—
She loved the light! and now has seen
The light perpetual round her flow.

Kingdom of Heaven, toward which we pray,
Whether alight of sun or star,—
Kingdom of Heaven toward which we yearn,
'Tis there the little children are!

They keep for us, secure and sweet,
Youth, unassailed by winter's rime,
And are a hostage given to be
Our shield against the wars of time.

And there amid the ways of peace,
Through Christ's love-lighted garden-lands,
She wanders with untroubled heart,
And gathers roses in her hands.

January 30, 1901.

VOICES OF CHILDREN

VOICES of children breaking
On eve's delaying hour;
Voices in low mirth calling
From the dusky garden-bower;—
They mock the late robin's chanting,
They call the young moon in glee,—
And through the sweet lingering twilight
They steal in to me.
Shy girl with your low glad laughter,
Wee boy with your bubbling mirth,
The odorous garden around you
Is a playground 'twixt Heaven and earth!
And what can I do to keep you,
O sweetest and dearest twain,
Ignorant of earth's harsh discords
And free of its stress and pain?

Soft treble and golden laughter
Fall faint through the starry eve;
And the robin in the maple
Wings home and ceases to grieve;
While with drowsy step and reluctant
To their cots the children climb,
Their throats still bubbling laughter
And their lips still murmuring rhyme.
I turn away to the garden
Their good night sweet in my ears,
And ponder and dream and wonder
At the mist-veiled tide of years;
Ah! if only the mirth and laughter
From their hearts might never die;
If the sweet, shy awe and wonder
In their gaze might always lie!
But the slim, young moon fades westward;
The night wind murmurs low,
And above me the planets question
What man nor star may know.

AT THE MONUMENT

MY little child about the Monument,
Climbs with slow step and awed and
wondering eyes,
And in soft treble questions me and tries
To gather something of the shaft's intent.
And as on me her trusting gaze is bent
And she repeats her many "whens" and
"whys,"
She hears, as of some fable of the skies,
Why the gray column toward the heavens is
sent.

And I am moved, thinking how tales of wars
Mean not so much to her as foolish rhyme
In her sweet ignorance of wounds and scars!
This is a plot to play in for a time,—
The shaft a mighty pillar of the stars
With easy steps for baby feet to climb!

MARJORIE

AN arch of blue above a quiet lake,
And still low shores where languid ripples break:
In quiet deeps of wood the brooding June
Watches the shadows of late afternoon,
And o'er the water idle swallows slip
With startled cries, to find their wings adrip!
But pleasantest of all it is to see
There, in the swaying hammock, Marjorie,
Repeating rhythmic tales the while her eyes
Mirror the lake, the wood, the shore, the skies.
Her grave voice leads afar through golden ways
Up sunny slopes among the fair dream days,
Where trumpets faintly blow from guarded walls
And Youth (or Marjorie!) the answer calls.

HORATIO AT ELSINORE

THREE is no luck at Elsinore
Since death came by and barred the door.
None enters now save ghost of thee,—
(And ghosts of every lock make free!)
The bat and owl now rule alone,
And spiders weave about the throne;
Never has there been any rest
Since jealous hate was here a guest;
And never more shall prince or king
Know love, or any kindly thing;
So through the chilling autumn rain
I call, and do not call in vain,—
Good night, sweet Prince!

The watchman in the lonely tower
Calls plaintively the passing hour,
And I who walk the parapet,
My face with autumn rain made wet,
Have bartered all my hopes for fears,
My future days for vanished years.

I—I alone at night may stand
Where once the Prince held fast my hand,
Or walk, where once as brothers twain
We walked, and shall not walk again;
And dreaming thus I cry to him,
Across the Deathland's border dim,
Good night, sweet Prince!

I promised that the world should know
The wretched crimes that wrought his woe;
And long to dull, unwilling ears
Have I discoursed, and known the jeers
Of doubt or mere contempt. I pause
At last, and leave my dead friend's cause!
I know that it is well with him
Beyond the Deathland's border dim.
Though luck be not at Elsinore
Her shame and wrong touch him no more.
So through the cheerless autumn rain
I cry, and do not cry in vain—
Good night, sweet Prince!

LABOR AND ART

WITH bits of metal, ivory and wood
Man makes an instrument and calls it
good;
But he that wrought with joy the fair design
Can not evoke the hidden chords divine.



THE BLIND BOYS

I SAW three blind boys in the park at play,
Piling with murmurous glee
The new-fallen leaves that round about them
lay,
And rearing them in forms they could not see.
Their sealed eyes had not known
The spring's leaves when new-blown,
Caught high on boughs they might not hold
or touch,
Yet they found sweet
These poor, dead, crumpled things about their
feet.
And passing them thus, I thought
That from the fair green tree of life not much
Is ever within sight or touch
Through the bright springs and summers of
our years,—

We, too, are blind!—
The blindness of weak faith and idle fears,
And reaching we scarce find
The budding leaves when they are young and
sweet,
And gain them only at last
When on the earth about us they are cast
To be a worthless plaything 'neath our feet.

IN THE STREET

I MET a dusky foreign woman, young
And curiously dressed,
With quaint coins hung
Above the yellow kerchief on her breast;
And by her side
A little child, dark-eyed,
Clutching some foolish plaything in its hand.
Such then, I thought, as these
We pick as flotsam from the ancient seas,—
The tossed and helpless straws upon the flood—
And bring to this new land,
To share what we have wrought with Saxon
blood.

And you, with pedagogic lore,
Insistent that we close the great wide-open
door,—

Chide me not in hard supercilious tone!

I am as proud as you
Of Saxon liberty and Saxon law,
Promised of old and by our hands reared true,
Yet would not stand apart
While under Pharaoh other peoples moan.
That half-barbaric child
With fear and awe
Of long-dead Cæsars lurking in its heart,
God does not quite disown,
And we are weak if we may be defiled!

MIRIAM: AT A CONCERT

WHEN the great chords with mighty
tumult rose,
Far-borne upon the trumpets' brazen cry,
While the sad 'cellos mourned and over all
As from spring meadows sang the violins;—
When on dim shadowy frontiers the soul heard
Not sound nor melody nor taunting theme,
But challenge from a fairer world than ours,—
'Twas then I saw you through the listening
throng,
Lips parted, dark eyes wondering and grave,
Head reverently bent and fingers clasped
To stay their trembling. What did you behold
On those near coasts of golden harmonies?
Did Israel's fallen harp wake in your blood
A hymn of glorious deeds on sacred plains?
Heard you the crash of trumpet-shaken walls,

Or, 'neath the moan of viols and call of
drums,
The hosts of Zion clanging forth to war?
 Ah me! Your snowy throat breaks in a sob
And tears are bright in your dream-haunted
 eyes
As the bold chords climb to the heights and die;
For you have seen a world-old pageant pass,
And the dumb sorrows of a thousand years
Have clutched your simple girl-heart; you have
 known
The ghetto's squalor, cringed beneath the
 knout,
Flinched at the bargains of the market-place,
But heard from Time's gray gulfs the ring-
 ing voice
Of Deborah, lifting Israel's fallen spears,
Marshaling the starry hosts 'gainst Sisera!

AILEEN

THE gods were sad the night that she was
born:

The faery lights shone over darkling moors,
And voices whispering through the lonely hills
Stole seaward to dark shores and told the waves,
And wave and star conferred in wonderment.
The gods were sad the night that she was born.

She sang to-night, and in her voice I heard
Those whispers and those voices and beheld
The faery lights, and from the plaintive shore
Saw wave and star commune. . . . She does
not know

How in her eyes the ancient marvels burn,
Or that the dreams flow in her blood like
stars

On quiet floods by night. There at the harp
Her voice caught up the centuries in a song
As old as heartache and as young as morn;
And armour rang and spears were glad with
blood . . .

Ah me! Those eyes, that voice, that eerie cry!
The gods were sad the night that she was
born!

TO THE SEASONS

SEASONS that pass me by in varied mood,
As on the unaging land you leave a trace,
Molding sometime a delicate flower's sweet face,
Touching again with green the somber wood,
Or drawing all beneath a snowy hood,—
Am I not worthy as they to find a place
In your remembrance? Am I made too base
To know what weed and thorn have understood?

Fair vernal time, I need your quickening
Even as the sleeping earth! O summer heat,
Make flower and fruit in me that I may bring
Full hands to autumn when above me beat
The serious winds; and winter, make me
strong
Like the glad music of your battle song!



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